Wellness Grant Feature of the Month: The Arts Administrative Group  
Ambassador: Kathryn Shickman, TAAG Wellness Ambassador

Practicing mindfulness, being more present as well as aware of our experiences, and focusing on breath and body posture has been proven to make individuals more creative, innovative and productive, and brings a greater sense of overall wellbeing.

The Breath and Balance Workshop at the Arts Administrative Group had 18 staff attendees, and included activities such as Reflective Writing, the Three Fun Facts Activity, Mindful Meditation, Breathing Exercises and giveaways for participants. The workshop helped learn skills and techniques to release physical and mental tension, increase body awareness, and show how breath can be used as a powerful centering and relaxation tool.

The takeaway items were selected to serve as reminders of the tips we learned in the Breath & Balance workshop so that these tips can be maintained over time. The small framed “Breathe” sign is meant to be placed in a prominent place at work, perhaps on the work desk, as a reminder to pause and take a deep breath every once in a while, and practice the breathing exercises that the workshop leader taught us.

Staff can use the notebook and pens to continue practicing the reflective writing exercises presented to us and to record thoughts on work-life balance. The tennis balls are used to continue the techniques shared on how to release physical tension. The folder contains handouts with inspiring quotes, additional reflective writing activities, and tips on breathing exercises, some healthy recipes, and links to additional resources.

Here are some of the comments and feedback about the workshop and the participants’ satisfaction:

“It was a really cool workshop and left me with a lot to think about in terms of balance in one’s life, breathing and starting each day with a healthy stretch. I would also like to thank Danika for leading the event. It was awesome to hear your real world advice. I especially loved the thought of re-thinking “Work/Life Balance” into just “balance”. It really resonated with me, and I am sure did with others as well.”

“Wonderful event! The morning time of 10:30-noon worked well. The presentation provided helpful materials”

“I enjoyed connecting more with my co-workers in TAAG, whom I do not interact with very often. I appreciated the exercise in identifying the most important facets of my life, and seeing how these facets are connected to my work environment, and how I prioritize these facets. I thought the event was really thought out and put together very well. I found the materials taught (breathing techniques/ life wholeness/stretching) to be very beneficial and something I will be able to implement immediately in my daily routine. Events such as these are very important in the workplace as they not only improve your own wellbeing, but they foster comradery and morale within our group as we work and learn together. I hope we have more wellness events in the future”

“The workshop was a great mixer for our program, giving us the opportunity to meet and interact in a non-work setting and experience and appreciate being human together. There was laughter and full participation among all involved and we all appreciated the “goodies” we got, I even have my “breathe” picture at my desk as a reminder to do so, and it actually has made a difference!”